

A FEW HINTS

ON THE CARE

OF CHILDREN

AT SEA

SAMUEL SPURGE

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BY

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CHAPTER I.

THERE are several books on the care of children under the ordinary circumstances of life. As far as we know there is no book on the care of children at sea. Some years ago there was but little need for any such book, but now, year by year the number of children who have to travel increases.

It is not our intention to do more in these few short chapters than give some hints to parents about the care of their children while travelling. If these hints prove of use to even a few of England's children, the object of this little book will have been gained.

As to the care of their children under ordinary circumstances, we would ask our readers to ask their own doctor to recommend to them one of the books on the subject.

CHAPTER II.

IF about to go on a voyage, one of the first important things that we have to settle is the choice of a cabin. In doing this remember the following hints :—

Get a cabin as far away from the screw as you can, and not too near to the engines.

If the child is very young, choose one of the lower cabins in the ship. This will be in most ships out of many of the noises that are on deck and about the saloon. Your cabin may be thus far away from the general saloon. This

has some inconveniences at meal times, but is probably, on the whole, the best arrangement. When choosing one of the lower cabins, it is best to choose it on the side of the ship upon which the prevailing winds do not blow. You will thus be able to keep the port hole open in your cabin on many days on which your fellow-passengers of the other side will have to keep their port holes shut, on account of the waves and the spray. Many of the steamers have electric fans in their cabins, but these will only make a current of air which will help to keep you cool, but they will never make up for fresh

air coming from the port hole. Bear this in mind, even though the cabin steward may try to persuade you that the fan will give you fresh air.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER important thing to settle before going on board is what food your child is to have on the voyage. If it is still young, and can be breast-fed, then of course nothing is needed except some tins of good dried or condensed milk that you can fall back on in case Nature's supply should for any reason fail. If, however, it cannot be breast-fed, or has reached the age of ten months and has been weaned, then it is most important to have found out before starting what kind of food, of the kinds

suitable for a journey, the child can take. To be feeding your child with some form of food at home, and then to go on board the steamer with perhaps a long voyage before you with only some new and entirely untried form of food for your child, is a great and serious mistake.

The difficulties grow less after the first year with each month, but continue to some extent till the child is two or three years old.



CHAPTER IV.

THERE are some other important things to see to before going on board.

Get a cloth bracket, with several pockets, for hanging up in the cabin beside your berth. Get also six or eight stout drawing pins to fasten it to the wall of your cabin. Drawing pins are in many ways much better than nails or tacks.

Get a basket cradle of some kind. It should be light, so that it can be easily carried up on deck when desired. Get some light metal or wire frame

or cage to stand over the cradle. Get curtains of mosquito netting to go over the metal frame and cradle. These are valuable at times to keep off flies which may wake the infant, or to keep off mosquitoes, which may come on the vessel while you are in some of the ports. The metal frame should rise a foot or two above the edge of the cradle. The curtains, being of mosquito netting, do not keep the child from getting the air. They can be used either on deck or in the cabin. Make sure that the frame can be easily taken off and folded up when not needed.

Take also some pieces of

common soap for washing clothes. You may be glad of it on board.

Of course take also the child's toilet basket, which should be made of such a size and shape that it will fit into the child's basket cradle. The toilet basket must contain all the child's toilet requisites. It ought to contain the following :—

Violet powder.

Fuller's earth.

Antiseptic dusting powder, made by mixing together the following :—

Boracic acid powder... 2 parts.

Powdered starch ... 3 parts.

Oxide of zinc powder 1 part.

A tube of boracic acid ointment made up with lanoline.

A few pointed soap suppositories simply cut from any pure washing soap.

Pure soap for the child's bath.

One set of day clothes.

One set of night clothes.

Two extra binders.

Clean linen rag or lint.

Gamgee tissue if infant is young.

A little absorbent cotton wool.

Thimble, needles, and pins.

Large and small safety pins.

Two bodkins.

Tape and cotton.

Roll of sarcenet baby ribbon (white).

Round pointed scissors.

A little old flannel for fomentations in case of illness.

Be sure to take the ointment in tubes, not in pots.

The simple uncoloured Fuller's earth is a specially good dusting powder on a voyage.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN you go on board do not delay in taking leave of your friends till the steamer is starting, but go at once to your cabin and get everything into order there. Hang up the cloth bracket with the drawing pins, and put into the pockets of the bracket the various things that you may want to lay your hand on, especially any bottles or things liable to be broken. The castor oil bottle, the eau de Cologne bottle, &c., are safest in the pockets of the bracket. Also get the basket cradle ready, and put all neces-

sary articles where you can lay your hand on them at a moment's notice. After you start, if you encounter any rough weather, you will not regret having taken this advice.

Also take care to make the acquaintance of the *head* steward and of the stewardess. This is worth doing and is best done at once, when you first go on board. There may be many passengers on board, and if you want these officials to go out of their way to do extra things for you, it is only reasonable that you should see them and speak to them when you first go on board.

The following story was told to us a little time ago. It has

an important bearing here, so we give it.

The story says that a man who was anxious to arrive in good time at the railway station that he was going to, went and made a small present to the engine driver, telling him that he hoped he would hurry on the train as he had an important appointment at the station they were going to. However, upon arriving at their destination the train was past the time and the passenger was too late for his appointment. Somewhat annoyed he went and reproachfully asked the engine driver why he had not got him into the station in good time for

his appointment. "Oh, sir," answered the driver, "it was not my fault, it was the guard that delayed me and I could not get on." Then the passenger went to the guard and asked him why he had not managed to have the train up to time, and why he had delayed the driver from getting on more promptly. "Ah, sir," replied the guard knowingly, "sure, you greased the wheels at the wrong end of the train." There is a lesson here that may be learned, and remembered too, if it is not against the rules of the Company in whose ship you are sailing.

When you go on board,

another thing sometimes to see to is that you have some means of getting a light at night. It is needful to see to this when travelling on some of the smaller lines abroad, if, as sometimes happens, you are sleeping on board the night before the steamer starts.

CHAPTER VI.

WE wish in this chapter to mention a few miscellaneous hints for the voyage.

Some small things can sometimes be washed in your cabin, and if the sunshine and the breeze are coming through your port hole they may sometimes be easily dried in your cabin too. If they cannot be dried in your cabin the stewardess is often willing to dry them for you in the engine room.

On some lines of steamers there is a washing staff on board, who do your washing for you at a reasonable figure.

Sometimes on the vessel very loud noises occur unexpectedly. For instance, as you are carrying your infant down below near dinner time some day, you may meet one of the under-stewards coming out of the saloon loudly ringing a large dinner bell. This is not good for your infant when very close, even if the infant is awake. Sometimes these loud noises cannot be avoided by any amount of care and forethought. If you are suddenly brought into any such noise, the infant's ears may be, to a great extent, protected by gently pressing one of its ears against your chest as it lies upon your arm,

while with the hand of your other arm you gently but firmly cover the other ear. This is a very simple thing when mentioned to you, but not to be forgotten. It was first mentioned to us on one of our voyages by a friend who had spent many years of his life at sea and who has a large family of little ones of his own.

In bathing an infant on board ship it is generally best to use fresh water, and not to give it a bath when its mother is having hers in the salt water in the bathroom. The infant's bath of fresh water can be given in the bathroom, if necessary, by arranging the

hour with the stewardess, but we have found it easier with a young infant to give it its bath in the basin in the cabin. Some warm water can usually be obtained from the steward to mix with what is always kept in the cabin. If the sea is rough, while the mother bathes the baby her husband or friend can stand behind her holding her, so that she may have both hands free without holding on and without fear of falling.

When your children are having their meals, make it a rule to be present yourself. See that their food is suitably prepared and that the sugar and salt that they use are not

left between meals standing on the side-table, receiving all the dust that is flying about the saloon. See also that the fruit provided for them is not over ripe or bad. Sometimes we have seen fruit of a very doubtful character on the children's table at sea.

CHAPTER VII.

IT is well always to have a few drugs with you when travelling. Besides the castor oil and the eau de Cologne that we have already mentioned, take a few ounces of Effervescing Sulphate of Magnesium. This is wholesome, harmless, cheap, and often very useful. It may be taken in half a tumbler of water. It is a mild aperient. It is not suitable for a young child, but for the mother is often good if she is not feeling well,

or has a headache. One or two teaspoonfuls or more may be taken at a time. It ought not to be taken just after a meal. The first thing in the morning is generally the best time to take it. When buying it, ask for Effervescing Sulphate of Magnesium and do not be persuaded to buy some patent medicine with a fine name instead. Beware of all quack and patent medicines so much advertised in these days.

Take also a few ounces of pyrethrum powder in a tin. This is a simple and cheap insect powder. A little may be shaken on the berths, floor, and elsewhere to destroy fleas

and other insects, if these are present.

Take also a six-penny tin of "Honey Fly Gum." This may be got from any chemist or direct from the makers, Messrs. Tunbridge and Wright, Reading. It is a good fly trap. It is very undesirable to have flies walking over everything. A piece of string may be smeared with the fly gum and then hung across your cabin or elsewhere. Take care to hang the string out in an open place where the flies like to alight, and not merely across some dark corner.

Lastly, if possible, ask your medical adviser as to any other

drugs that might be suitable for your children or yourself. Your medical adviser will know what would be specially suitable in your case.





